

saw (whipsaw) owned by T Lincoln

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Curios and Relics

Tools

Whipsaw

Owned by Thomas Lincoln

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

From the files of the

Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

Sworn before me this 1st day of April, 1929.

COUNTY OF JEFFERSON)
STATE OF KENTUCKY)

Joseph LEE POWELL, being first duly sworn by me deposes and states as follows:

That his name is Joseph Lee Powell, age eighty-two years, and that he lives in Larue County, Kentucky, near Hodgenville, on Rural Route No. 2 and is the son of Peter R. Powell, now deceased.

Affiant further states that Abraham Lincoln gave to his father a certain whip saw, which was used for sawing lumber by man power in the year of 1817 or 1818, at the time the Lincoln family moved from Kentucky to Indiana and that the saw remained in affiants family ever since.

The affiant further states that the saw was a very valuable tool and the only one of its kind in the community known to his father; that since it was his fathers custom to so mark his tools with a secret mark, the saw was marked with three notches filed about twelve inches from the big end of the saw and on the back thereof, representing his initials "P. R. P." and that also the same initials were indented with a punch on the big end of the saw.

The affiant states the saw presented to him at the tire of this affidavit is the saw, to his personal knowledge, that was given to his father and Austin Gollaher, for their heroic deed in saving his life from the treacherous waters of the Rolling Fork River, just a short time before leaving Kentucky, by Abraham Lincoln himself, even though he was only eight or nine years of age, and affiants father was only ten or eleven years of age; that Abraham Lincoln's father Thomas Lincoln, who valued the saw very much gave it to Abraham for that purpose and as a token of appreciation for their services.

The affiant further states that while he is now eighty-two years of age, he still has all his faculties and is of sound memory; that realizing he has but a short time in which to live he would have no motive for making a false statement and that, therefore, the foregoing statements are true, having had personal knowledge, since he was large enough to remember, of the saw and his fathers solemn narrative of above stated facts.

I, Cecil Bell, a notary Public in and for the State and County aforesaid, hereby certify that the foregoing affidavit of Joseph Lee Powell, was taken by me this April 1, 1929.

WITNESS MY HAND AND SEAL This April 1, 1929.

My COMMISSION EXPIRES

Copy



May the 12th 1931.

Mr E. J. Barry kindly
lets in Request that I
Send you 6 of the
Photographs I had them
made the last opportunity
and say they are not
very good ones, but the
light I can do at Present
they are very much
below the Standard if they
are not the plain. They
can not be sent back
and will Pay for them
they are so bad and
thin. Now they have 18
inch & put heavy and
8 inches wide at big End
and 6 inches at little End

I have a affidavit
of the San that
if you do wish &
will send you a
Copy of it. I am now
60 years old and have
heard and known of
this San all my life
and their is quite a
Story running with it
when this San fell in
my hands. & I am not
so hard a wife. and
had an old man make
a sworn statement to
it. Being the original
Thomas Lincoln San
man & he bore the
San and if would

like to sell it, as
I am getting old and
my husband is old
don't have work steady
as he is working for
the Govt. A.R. Co. So I
will be very thankful if
you could give me any
information on selling
it. If you wish I
will lend you the copy
at affidavit. So let
me know when you
want yours truly
Mrs. J. L. Morelith
311 Huron Street
Lansville Ky.

meredith
70

June 11 - 1931.

Lanville

Dr. Louis Lévesque,

Kind son of those who
decided to withdraw
from running and sell
himself to the ~~French~~ ^{French} which
which is a step in
that direction. ~~French~~
Lévesque Father who
owned, lost which
he gave two little one to
Gizel and his wife who
friends are moving a
lot from Quebec.

When he owned it
of first there were the
little ~~French~~ ^{French} at down
the ~~French~~ ^{French} in the house

and sending you a copy of
the original letter which I have
written it will be work
saves, and to give
to Heretica boy. And
as I have not had time to
affix a stamp, the sooner the
better. And I am
sending you one at
each kind of Phatado, and
a copy of the affidavit
you may keep these
names - except for
that there has been some
error & people here to
receive them. They have
had no office or
but a sort of a hole to
put it, and I am going

old and dry like
old wood. I
decided to take a sample
of it, and to have it
burned since I am afraid
it would be taken in
as a good winter wood
the day after it was cut.
As I know since it
has been burning it has
not given off much smoke
or smoke in the傍晝，
but found out just in
a short time later the
smoke was very strong
and the air bad.
Piscator supposed to
wash a large chlorine
big Piscator made his
own smoke fire

4

Keep fine green
and am the most
gentle, most gentle.
I have a number of
old letters from
affectionate old people my
wife wrote to me at
various times at my
home and they will
show you how kind
she was. I will not
tell the details of our life
but we left the States a
little at the beginning
of last month and
are thinking now
of going to New
Orleans (Mercedita) &
St. Louis, St. Louis.



Louisville, Ky., Feb. 12—(AP Wirephoto)—The Saw Given to Lincoln's Rescuer—James L. Meredith exhibiting a nine foot whip saw said to have been given by the Emancipator's father to a neighbor for helping save little Abe from drowning one day before the family moved to Indiana.

Phila Bulletin 2-12-56

February 12, 1936.

Whipsaw's Fate Made Rail Splitter of Lincoln

Family's Log-Ripping Tool Given Away As Reward When "Little Abe" Saved From River

By John L. Newman.

THE possibility that Abraham Lincoln would more properly be known as the whipsawyer President than the rail-splitter is suggested by an antique saw, owned by Mrs. James L. Meredith, 311 Huron, who claims it was once the property of the Lincoln family. Mrs. Meredith's history of the whipsaw, if accurate, indicates that young Abe might have worked his timbers with the saw as well as with ax and adz.

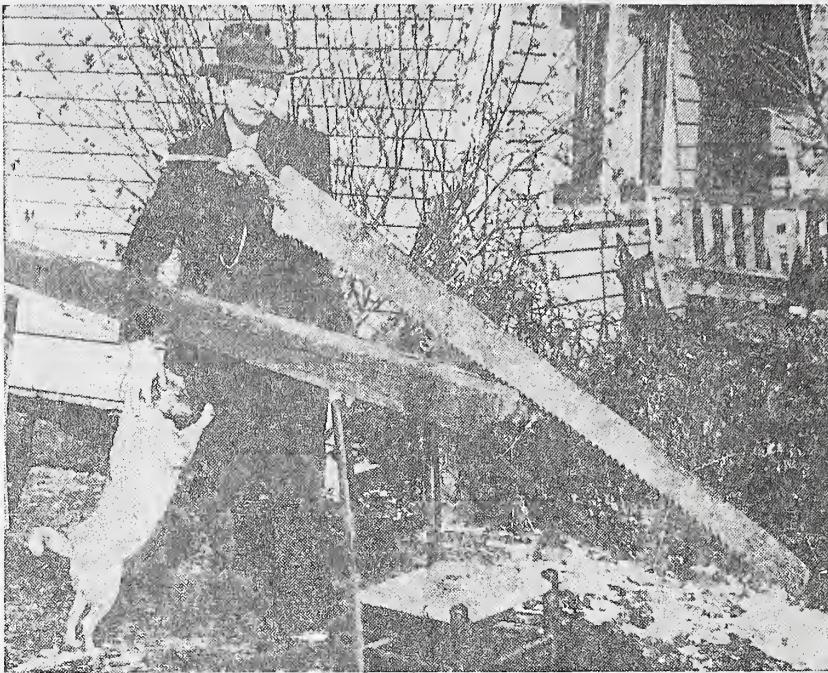
On the other hand, since the saw is said to have passed from the Lincolns' possession when the future President was but 8 years old, and perhaps was not replaced, its subtraction from the family's household gear may have been largely responsible for the youthful Lincoln's rail-splitting training.

The saw is of exceptional antiquarian and historical interest because, Mrs. Meredith says, of its connection with an incident of vital importance in Lincoln's early childhood.

It was, she explains, presented as a reward by his father, Thomas, to a neighbor, Peter R. Powell, who, with one Austin Gallaher, saved little Abe from drowning in the turbulent waters of Rolling Fork Creek shortly before the family moved to Indiana.

* * *

Lost for more than half a century, the nine-foot steel saw, deeply rusted, was recovered from the bed of the Nolin River at the Hart County-Grayson County line in 1926 by a swimmer, George Logsdon. Hearing that Mrs. Meredith's brother, T. N. Smith, Grayson County, was familiar



—By Times Staff Photographer.

Assisted in spirit at least by his dog, James L. Meredith, 311 Huron, shows in this pose the proper way to sight preparatory to ripping timber with the once Lincoln-owned nine-foot whipsaw given away as a reward when little Abe was rescued from drowning.

with the history of the ancient tool, Mr. Logsdon gave it to him and he presented it to Mrs. Meredith.

Mr. Smith heard the story of the saw in his early childhood

from the late Mr. Powell, he states in an affidavit. The story is confirmed and the authenticity of the relic attested in an affidavit.

by Joseph Lee Powell of Hodgen-

Details of the rescue are not known but the deep gratitude of the Lincoln family appears evident since the saw was said to be the only one of its kind in the community at a time when tools of

any sort were extremely rare. It was presented to the elder Powell, then 11, by young Abraham himself, acting on his father's instructions, Mr. Powell testifies.

Prizing it highly, the recipient marked it as was his custom with three filed notches on the back of the blade approximately one foot from the handle, the son recalls. These are still clearly visible and greatly enlarged by the erosion resulting from long exposure, he adds. The saw was also marked, he says, with his father's initials, P. R. P., inscribed with a punch on the flat of the blade. Although these are not legible, Mrs. Meredith believes that some sort of chemical treatment might bring them to light.

* * *

Remarking that some historians hold that Dennis Hanks, a cousin of the Lincolns, and the Gallaher lad, saved little Abe from the river, Mr. Powell insists that this is an error and that his father performed the part attributed to Hanks.

The floors of the ancestral home in the Horse Shoe Bend of the Nolin River are made of boards believed to have been cut by the Lincoln saw.

The saw is now kept in a specially fitted case at the Meredith home where many historians, collectors and sightseers have inspected it in the last few years, the owner says, inviting all others who are interested.

